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Svetlana bid to visit India called too risky

By Ernest Weatherall
Daily News Foreign Service

NEW DELHI - It probably will be a long time before Svetlana Stalin ever returns to the Indian village she described as a "small paradise on Earth . . . where I began to live and breathe."

Svetlana expressed her desire, in a letter to the Indian government to visit the village, Kalakankar, in Uttar Pradesh, where she remained after bringing her husband's ashes to India.

The Indian government, which now has closer relations with Moscow than with any Western country, turned down the idea, it was learned. It was also learned that the CIA told Svetlana she would be in danger if she returned to India, even if she were an American citizen.

THIS DANGER would not be from the Indians, but from the Soviet KGB agents in the country watching over the thousands of technicians who came from Moscow under the Russian aid program.

Svetlana's comment on the Indian government's refusal was that she had never asked for permission to visit India, but she did say she hoped to visit Kalakankar someday.

Svetlana's defection greatly embarrassed the Indian government, which would like to forget the incident. Stalin's daughter would not have defected if the Indians would have allowed her to remain in the village.

HOWEVER, the Soviets became concerned when Svetlana continued to live in the Ganges village. Pressure was put on Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to have Svetlana return to Moscow.

Svetlana finally agreed to return to Moscow. But two days before her scheduled departure, she sought help at the American Embassy in New Delhi.

After Svetlana's flight, the Soviets sent several plane loads of additional KGB agents to India to tighten up security, and prevent further defections of Russians working in the country.

DESPITE THE new security precautions, nine months later, a young teacher with a Soviet cultural group, Aziz Ouloug-Zade, who was about to return to Moscow, turned up at the American Embassy to ask for a visa.

This time the Soviets were ready. They immediately canceled the defector's passport.

Rather than remain confined in the American Embassy indefinitely, Ouloug-Zade agreed

to turn himself over to Indian authorities.

Later, because of the pressure of public opinion in the free world, and also in India,

the Indian government refused to return him to the Soviets and allowed Ouloug-Zade to emigrate to the United Kingdom.



Svetlana Stalin